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ABSTRACT

Eight position statements from the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), published from 1990 to 1993, are presented. "Position Statement on the Value of Library Media Programs in Education" (March 1993) affirms the importance of school library media specialists as part of the total educational team. "Sample Statement on the Role of the School Library Media Program" (October 1990) explains the functions and importance of the library media center. "Resource Based Instruction: A Statement on the Role of the School Library Media Specialist in the Whole Language Approach" (June 1993) argues for supporting the whole language program through the school library. "Access to Resources and Services in the School Library Media Program: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights" (amended January 1990) points out the role of the library in promoting intellectual freedom. "Position Statement on Flexible Scheduling" (June 1991) discusses class scheduling in the school library. "Position Statement on Appropriate Staffing for School Library Media Centers" (April 1991) presents principles for staffing. "Position Statement on Preparation of School Library Media Specialists" (September 1992) defines the master's degree as the entry-level degree for the profession. "Statement on Confidentiality of Library Records" acknowledges the right to privacy of library users. (SLD)

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POSITION STATEMENT ON THE VALUE OF LIBRARY MEDIA PROGRAMS IN EDUCATION

School library media specialists are an integral part of the total educational team which prepares students to become responsible citizens in a changing global society. In today's information age, an individual's success, even existence, depends largely on the ability to access, evaluate and utilize information. Library media specialists are leaders in carrying out the school's instructional program through their separate but overlapping roles of information specialist, teacher and instructional consultant.

The *National Goals for Education and America 2000* challenge our nation to make education a top priority in preparing students to compete in the worldwide marketplace and make informed decisions about problems facing society. To guarantee every young person an equal and effective educational opportunity, officials must provide each school with library media facilities and resources to meet curriculum needs. Officials must also ensure that each school's staff includes library media professionals and support personnel to carry out the mission of the instructional program.

The American Association of School Librarians is committed to the development and improvement of strong library media programs in all schools. The ability to locate and use information in solving problems, expanding ideas and becoming informed citizens depends on access to adequate library media facilities, appropriate resources and qualified personnel. Recent studies, such as *The Impact of School Library Media Centers on Academic Achievement*, show a strong positive correlation between library media programs and student achievement.

The American Association of School Librarians urges all administrators, teachers, school board members, parents and community members to recognize the power of information and the critical need for strong professionally staffed library media programs so all students become effective users of information.

Suggested Readings:

- American Association of School Librarians and Association for Educational Communications and Technology. *Information Power: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs*. Chicago: ALA, 1988.
- Lance, Keith Curry et al. *The Impact of School Library Media Centers on Academic Achievement*. Castle Rock, CO: Hi Willow Research & Publishing, 1993.
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- (A Special Section on the School Library for the Nineties). *Phi Delta Kappan* 73 (March 1992): 521-537.
- Stripling, Barbara K. *Libraries for the National Education Goals*. Syracuse, NY: ERIC Clearinghouse on Information Resources, Syracuse University, 1992.

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AASL

SAMPLE STATEMENT ON THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA PROGRAM

The school library media program is not only integral to and supportive of the school curriculum, but also provides a mechanism for choice and exploration beyond the prescribed course of study. The school library media program provides a wide range of resources and information that satisfy the educational needs and interests of students. Materials are selected to meet the wide range of students' individual learning styles. The school library media center is a place where students may explore more fully classroom subjects that interest them, expand their imagination, delve into areas of personal interest, and develop the ability to think clearly, critically, and creatively about the resources they have chosen to read, hear, or view.

The school library media center provides a setting where students develop skills they will need as adults to locate, analyze, evaluate, interpret, and communicate information and ideas in an information-rich world. Students are encouraged to realize their potential as informed citizens who think critically and solve problems, to observe rights and responsibilities relating to the generation and flow of information and ideas, and to appreciate the value of literature in an educated society.

The school library media program serves all of the students of the community--not only the children of the most powerful, the most vocal or even the majority, but all of the students who attend the school. The collection includes materials to meet the needs of all learners, including the gifted, as well as the reluctant readers, the mentally, physically, and emotionally impaired, and those from a diversity of backgrounds. The school library media program strives to maintain a diverse collection that represents various points of view on current and historical issues, as well as a wide variety of areas of interest to all students served. Though one parent or member of the school community may feel a particular title in the school library media center's collection is inappropriate, others will feel the title is not only appropriate but desirable.

The school library media center is the symbol to students of our most cherished freedom--the freedom to speak our minds and hear what others have to say. I urge that the decision of this board be one which reaffirms the importance and value of the freedom to read, view, and listen and sends a message to students that in America, they have the right to choose what they will read, view, or hear and are expected to develop the ability to think clearly, critically, and creatively about their choices; rather than allowing others to do this for them.



**RESOURCE BASED INSTRUCTION:
A STATEMENT ON THE ROLE
OF THE SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALIST
IN THE WHOLE LANGUAGE APPROACH**

The whole language program is a process for developing literacy by integrating oral and written language experiences into the literature and content areas. Spoken language, reading, and writing are learned simultaneously. Through this holistic approach, with students reading "real books" and writing for the purpose of communicating, learning becomes relevant, interesting, and motivational and prepares students for life-long learning. Acquisition, organization, and dissemination of resources to support the whole language program through the library media center is cost-effective for the entire school district.

The following elements are integral to an effective whole language program:

- ◆ The library media center is flexibly scheduled so that students and teachers have unlimited physical and intellectual access to a wide range of materials. Students are not limited to using only commercially prescribed or teacher-selected materials.
- ◆ Students choose from a varied, non-graded collection of materials which reflect their personal interests.
- ◆ Students learn to identify, analyze, and synthesize information by using a variety of materials in a variety of formats.
- ◆ Multi-disciplinary approaches to teaching and learning are encouraged.
- ◆ Teachers and library media specialists cooperatively select materials and collaboratively plan activities that offer students an integrated approach to learning.
- ◆ Teachers and library media specialists share responsibility for reading and information skill instruction. They plan and teach cooperatively based on the needs of the student.
- ◆ Continual staff development is critical to whole language instruction.

The responsibility for successful implementation of whole language is shared by the entire school community -- teachers, library media specialists, and administrators working together.

adopted by the AASL Board, June, 1993

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Access to Resources and Services in the School Library Media Program
An interpretation of the **LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS**

The school library media program plays a unique role in promoting intellectual freedom. It serves as a point of voluntary access to information and ideas and as a learning laboratory for students as they acquire critical thinking and problem solving skills needed in a pluralistic society. Although the educational level and program of the school necessarily shape the resources and services of a school library media program, the principles of the **LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS** apply equally to all libraries, including school library media programs.

School library media professionals assume a leadership role in promoting the principles of intellectual freedom within the school by providing resources and services that create and sustain an atmosphere of free inquiry. School library media professionals work closely with teachers to integrate instructional activities in classroom units designed to equip students to locate, evaluate, and use a broad range of ideas effectively. Through resources, programming, and educational processes, students and teachers experience the free and robust debate characteristic of a democratic society.

School library media professionals cooperate with other individuals in building collections of resources appropriate to the developmental and maturity levels of students. These collections provide resources which support curriculum and are consistent with the philosophy, goals, and objectives of the school district. Resources in school library media collections represent diverse points of view and current as well as historical issues.

While English is by history and tradition the customary language of the United States, the languages in use in any given community may vary. Schools serving communities in which other languages are used make efforts to accommodate the needs of students for whom English is a second language. To support these efforts, and to ensure equal access to resources and services, the school library media program provides resources which reflect the linguistic pluralism of the community.

Members of the school community involved in the collection development process employ educational criteria to select resources unfettered by their personal, political, social, or religious views. Students and educators served by the school library media program have access to resources and services free of constraints resulting from personal, partisan, or doctrinal disapproval. School library media professionals resist efforts by individuals to define what is appropriate for all students or teachers to read, view, or hear.

Major barriers between students and resources include: imposing age or grade level restrictions on the use of resources, limiting the use of interlibrary loan and access to electronic information, charging fees for information in specific formats, requiring permission from parents or teachers, establishing restricted shelves or closed collections, and labeling. Policies, procedures, and rules related to the use of resources and services support free and open access to information.

The school board adopts policies that guarantee students access to a broad range of ideas. These include policies on collection development and procedures for the review of resources about which concerns have been raised. Such policies, developed by the persons in the school community, provide for a timely and fair hearing and assure that procedures are applied equitably to all expressions of concern. School library media professionals implement district policies and procedures in the school.

Adopted July 2, 1986; amended January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council

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**POSITION STATEMENT
ON
FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING**

Schools must adopt the educational philosophy that the library media program is fully integrated into the educational program. This integration strengthens the teaching/learning process so that students can develop the vital skills necessary to locate, analyze, evaluate, interpret, and communicate information and ideas. When the library media program is fully integrated into the instructional program of the school, students, teachers, and library media specialists become partners in learning. The library program is an extension of the classroom. Information skills are taught and learned within the context of the classroom curriculum. The wide range of resources, technologies, and services needed to meet students' learning and information needs are readily available in a cost-effective manner.

The integrated library media program philosophy requires that an open schedule must be maintained. Classes cannot be scheduled in the library media center to provide teacher release or preparation time. Students and teachers must be able to come to the center throughout the day to use information sources, to read for pleasure, and to meet and work with other students and teachers.

Planning between the library media specialist and the classroom teacher, which encourages both scheduled and informal visits, is the catalyst that makes this integrated library program work. The teacher brings to the planning process a knowledge of subject content and student needs. The library media specialist contributes a broad knowledge of resources and technology, an understanding of teaching methods, and a wide range of strategies that may be employed to help students learn information skills. Cooperative planning by the teacher and library media specialist integrates information skills and materials into the classroom curriculum and results in the development of assignments that encourage open inquiry.

The responsibility for flexibly scheduled library media programs must be shared by the entire school community.

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION endorses the philosophy that the library media program is an integral part of the district's educational program and ensures that flexible scheduling for library media centers is maintained in all buildings and at all levels.

THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION supports this philosophy and monitors staff assignments to ensure appropriate staffing levels so that all teachers, including the library media specialists, can fulfill their professional responsibilities.

THE PRINCIPAL creates the appropriate climate within the school by advocating the benefits of flexible scheduling to the faculty, by monitoring scheduling, by ensuring appropriate staffing levels, and by providing joint planning time for classroom teachers and library media specialists.

THE TEACHER uses resource-based instruction and views the library media program as an integral part of that instruction.

THE LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALIST is knowledgeable about curriculum and classroom activities, and works cooperatively with the classroom teacher to integrate information skills into the curriculum.

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**POSITION STATEMENT ON
APPROPRIATE STAFFING FOR
SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA CENTERS**

The success of any school library media program, no matter how well designed, depends ultimately on the quality and number of the personnel responsible for the program. A well-educated and highly motivated professional staff, adequately supported by technical and clerical staff, is critical to the endeavor.

Although staffing patterns are developed to meet local needs, certain basic staffing requirements can be identified. Staffing patterns must reflect the following principles:

1. **All students, teachers, and administrators in each school building at all grade levels must have access to a library media program provided by one or more certificated library media specialist working full-time in the school's library media center.**
2. **Both professional personnel and support staff are necessary for all library media programs at all grade levels.** Each school must employ at least one full-time technical assistant or clerk for each library media specialist. Some programs, facilities, and levels of service will require more than one support staff member for each professional.
3. **More than one library media professional is required in many schools.** The specific number of additional professional staff is determined by the school's size, number of students and of teachers, facilities, specific library media program components, and other features of the school's instructional program. A reasonable ratio of professional staff to teacher and student populations is required in order to provide for the levels of service and library media program development described in Information Power: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs.

All school systems must employ a district library media director to provide leadership and direction to the overall library media program. The district director is a member of the administrative staff and serves on committees that determine the criteria and policies for the district's curriculum and instructional programs. The director communicates the goals and needs of both the school and district library media programs to the superintendent, board of education, other district-level personnel, and the community. In this advocacy role, the district library media director advances the concept of the school library media specialist as a partner with teachers and promotes a staffing level that allows the partnership to flourish.

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POSITION STATEMENT ON PREPARATION OF SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALISTS

School library media specialists have a broad undergraduate education with a liberal arts background and hold a master's degree or equivalent from a program that combines academic and professional preparation in library and information science, education, management, media, communications theory, and technology. The academic program of study includes some directed field experience in a library media program, coordinated by a faculty member in cooperation with an experienced library media specialist. Library media specialists meet state certification requirements for both the library media specialist and professional educator classifications. While there may be many practicing library media specialists who have only an undergraduate degree and whose job performance is outstanding, the master's degree is considered the entry-level degree for the profession.

The graduate degree is earned at colleges and universities whose programs are accredited by appropriate bodies such as the American Library Association (ALA), the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), or state education agencies.

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STATEMENT ON CONFIDENTIALITY OF LIBRARY RECORDS

The members of the American Library Association,* recognizing the right to privacy of library users, believe that records held in libraries which connect specific individuals with specific resources, programs or services, are confidential and not to be used for purposes other than routine record keeping: i.e. to maintain access to resources, to assure that resources are available to users who need them, to arrange facilities, to provide resources for the comfort and safety of patrons, or to accomplish the purposes of the program or service. The library community recognizes that children and youth have the same rights to privacy as adults.

Libraries whose recordkeeping systems reveal the names of users would be in violation of the confidentiality of library record laws adopted in many states. School library media specialists are advised to seek the advice of counsel if in doubt about whether their record keeping systems violate the specific laws in their states. Efforts must be made within the reasonable constraints of budgets and school management procedures to eliminate such records as soon as reasonably possible.

With or without specific legislation, school library media specialists are urged to respect the rights of children and youth by adhering to the tenets expressed in the Confidentiality of Library Records Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights and the ALA Code of Ethics.

*ALA Policy 52.4, 54.16

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